

Mrs D. and I had sitting today at Arlington Heights, and the usurpation by "Kate Walsh" was extraordinary. She (Mrs Piper) had got hold of my hands, and I had to make a few fragmentary notes afterwards of the remarks, themselves fragmentary, which she made. The personality seemed very intense, and spoke in effortful whispers.

The curious feature here is that 'Kate Walsh' initially addresses herself to the James family members even though the sitter is Hodgson, and it is his hands that 'she' is determined to hold. After some confusion the identity of Hodgson is acknowledged and attention turns to him.

"William – William – God bless you". (Who are you?) – "Kate-Walsh" – (I know you). "Help me – help me". [Taking my right hand with her right, and passing it to her left and making me take hold of her left hand]. "That hand's dead – dead – this one's alive" [i.e., the right] – "help me". The left hand appeared to be at a decidedly lower temperature than the right. It was cooler than either of my hands, while the right hand was warmer than either of my hands.

"I'm alive – I'm alive – Albert's coming over soon. He can't stay – poor boy – poor boy – Albert – Alberts – Alfred – Albert – I know you – Alice – Alice – William – Alice". (Yes, I know. I'll tell them. You remember me. I stayed with you in New York). "Yes – I know. But, oh, I can't remember. I'm so cold – I'm so cold. Oh, help me – help me". [Making tremulous movements of hands]. (I know. I'll tell them. You remember me; my name's Hodgson). "Yes. Mr Hodgson. Where are the girls? Yes. You had fish for breakfast on the second day, didn't you?". (I don't remember very well). "And the tea – who was it spilt the cup of tea? Was it you or William?". [I think I remember something about the tea, but not very clearly]. "You were in the corner room – bedroom – upstairs. Were you cold? Then there was some blancmange – you didn't like that. No, It was cream – Bavarian cream. Albert – poor boy; he's coming soon. William". [Something about arranging the property]. "William – God bless him".

The above was much less than was really said. But that was the sort of thing, and nothing *à la mode* Phinuit at all. It was the most strikingly personal thing I have seen. I recollect having fish for some meal, and recall that some remarks were made about it at the time. I recall very clearly that Mrs Walsh made tea more than once for my special benefit, and I seem to remember something about the spilling of a cup of tea, but cannot be sure. I don't know whether my room was called corner or not. It was an end room, but

was in the front of the house. There was a little stumbling over the name, which appeared to be Albert. I don't recall anything about the blancmange or cream stuff, but I have little taste for that kind of dish.

### Concerning the sitting of November 7th and the "Kate Walsh" control

Professor James says, in letter of November 10th, 1889:

The 'Kate Walsh' freak is very interesting. The first mention of her by Phinuit was when she was living, three years or more ago, when she had written to my wife imploring her not to sit for development. Phinuit knew this in some incomprehensible way. A year later [in a sitting] with Margaret Gibbens [sister of Mrs James], I present, Phinuit alluded jocosely to this fear of hers again, and made some derisive remarks about her unhappy marriage, calling her an 'old crank', &c. Her death was announced last spring, as you remember. In September, sitting with me and my wife, Mrs Piper was suddenly 'controlled' by her spirit, who spoke directly with much impressiveness of manner, and great similarity of temperament to herself. Platitudes. She said Henry Wyckoff had experienced a change, and that Albert was coming over soon; nothing definite about either. Queer business!

Miss E. R. Walsh wrote:

258, Fourth Avenue,  
December 1st, 1889

My Dear William,

In reply to the questions you ask apropos of Mr Hodgson's "sitting":

Poor Aunt Kate's right side was the one affected by the paralysis. She had the use of her left hand and arm until near the end. I have no recollection of hearing of any such incidents as the "spilling of tea", &c.; but I thought if anything of the kind had occurred, Margaret, in Forty-fourth-street, would be likely to remember it, so, when I was there today to ask after Cousin H. [Henry Wyckoff], I questioned M., but with absolutely no confirmatory result.

The partial coincidence of the following facts with the statements made to you and your wife comes a little nearer to the mark. The last week in August Cousin Henry did have a very severe convulsion, lasting many hours, from which the doctors thought he could hardly rally. An hour before, one of the nurses, in helping move him, knocked under accidentally the folding support on one side of the cot on which he lay, and the

poor man slipped almost to the floor. He did not really fall, and was not at all injured, but the nervous shock brought on the convulsion. Wonderful to say, he came out of it entirely, and for several days after his brain seemed much more active; he made constant and excited efforts to speak, and it seemed as though some great change might take place in his condition. This happened in Mrs Griffitt's stay with him. By the time we came to Forty-fourth-street, in September, he had subsided to a great extent, and then, in a week or two more, began a gradual failure, which has been going on by the slowest degrees ever since. Now he can't even lift what they call his "good hand" outside the bed covering without help. They think, however, he may live months as he is. What a death in life! Poor man, to have such an end to his harmless life. Again, Albert did intermit his visits for seven weeks or more, from the middle of August to early in October, being detained at home by a severe attack of bronchitis, and when he first reappeared one of the nurses said he looked more like dying than his uncle. Since then, however, he has quite recovered, and starts for California on

the 18th.

*Elizabeth Robertson Walsh*

As before, the information given is not entirely correct – and supposing it to have come indeed from the deceased Kate Walsh, it seems plausible enough that forecasting by the dead can be as erroneous as when it is made by the living; but the interest here centres not so much on the facts or the source of the material (Hodgson as the sitter, the James family, or anyone else within the boundless scope of super-psi) but rather on the personal element. On previous occasions the Phinuit approach to Kate Walsh had been 'derisive' but there is nothing of this in the urgency of the intervention that so impressed Hodgson. Whether this episode was evolved by the medium's subconscious mind role-playing or a dramatic outburst from the deceased Kate Walsh, it was indeed what William James laconically described as "Queer business!"

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## A PSYCHOPRACTIC ANALYSIS OF THE PATELLAR REFLEX

MICHAEL A. THALBOURNE

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ON TUESDAY, 15TH NOVEMBER 2005, I experienced what I took to be a psychic event. At some time in the morning it had occurred to me that it might be worthwhile to subject the patellar (knee-jerk) reaction to an analysis from the point of view of the theory of psychopraxia (Thalbourne, 2004; 2005), and to show that it was in fact *not* an example of psychopractic causation. (One should be able to say what phenomena do *not* arise according to the theorized process, and why).

On the evening of the same day, at about 10 minutes to six, I was watching television, and a commercial came on: it consisted of a rapid succession of scenes, but suddenly, at one point, there were images of someone's knee being tested for the reflex with a special hammer! I know, introspectively, that I had not given any thought to the patellar reflex in recent times, nor had I ever seen this commercial before (and it did not appear again the following evening when I tried to confirm the observation). I myself therefore tentatively regard the incident

as "exo-psychopraxia" (a.k.a. psi), the so-called "pro attitude" being my extremely strong desire to collect convincing personal examples of coincidences, and in this case I was in the right place at the right time, the world complied, and my pro attitude was fulfilled.

The psychopractic process – to re-iterate an oft-used description – starts with the self (with its unconscious aspect); a pro attitude towards a particular goal, endosomatic or exosomatic; a set of necessary conditions in addition to those of the self and the pro attitude; and finally, if the sufficient condition is assembled, we get the sought-after goal. In the case of (for example) raising my left hand high above my head, I – who am a self – have a pro attitude – a favourable stance towards the goal of raising my hand aloft – and in most circumstances the volition (whatever that is: mental, physiological, or what have you) is translated into appropriate neural activation throughout specific parts of my nervous system, the muscles in my left arm are energized, and, usually, I do indeed achieve the